

# ROUGHING IT IN THE SIERRAS





**H**AVE you ever been awakened at 4 a.m. on a frosty morning to the call of "everybody get up—get up?"

Have you ever slept on the clammy, hard ground or in a bed of wild onions? Have you ever washed your own blue denim shirt with Ivory soap in a canvas bucket? These and many other things I have experienced this summer and have actually enjoyed them.

Each year the Sierra Club conducts an outing into the High Sierras. Anywhere from 200 to 250 people of all ages participate in these trips. Saddle horses may be rented but the majority of the club depends on the "dogs" for support. It is nice, however, to have a friend who rides and can be depended on to carry your knapsack and extra sweater, while his horse will come in very handy when provided with a stout rope, for he can then pull you up the zig-zags at an unbelievably fast pace and you will in time find yourself at the head of the party.

This is always beneficial, for in the Sierra Club it is a question of first come first served. You are told upon your arrival in camp "Men's camp to the right of commissary, women's to the left, and married people's behind it," for in this organization the latter do not rate at all.

"Oh this doing double harness  
May be all right down below,  
But in the High Sierra  
Married people have no show."

### Staking Your Claim

No matter how tired you are, or what the hour is, your first duty is to stake your claim. The choicest spots are naturally under trees, but if you are not among the first ten in camp this is hopeless.

"There are rocks in the cradle where I sleep,  
And roots and cones imbedded deep.  
Aslant I lie upon my bed,  
My feet are higher than my head."

Level ground, of course, is essential although a boulder here and there can be easily removed. There are many questions to ask yourself when choosing a permanent camp site—Will the packers drive the mules over your bed at 2 a.m.? Will water run down upon you in case of rain? Are there any people nearby who will be disturbed by your noise? Is there sufficient shade to allow you to sleep until nine? Are you near enough to commissary to enable you to be the first in line for food? And a million others. When you have found a site suitable to yourself and your particular group of campmates you strew knapsack, tin cup, sweater or bandana upon the ground to mark the spot and no one dares trespass thereafter. It is very essential to have at least one member of your party a fast hiker or you will sleep in wild onions as we once did, or still worse, on the side of a rocky cliff.

## By Frances Lee

"While the sun's behind the mountains  
and the frost is in the air  
We're up and off and hiking on our way;  
We don't know where we're going and we  
don't supremely care,  
But we'll be there when the evening ends  
the day."

### The Start

Everybody is up at four on the days when we move camp and after rolling your dunnage bag you weigh it and probably find it over the required thirty-five pounds. If this horrible thing does occur you reopen it and extract a shoe or sweater, then submit it again for approval. If you are lucky it will be marked "thirty-five" in white chalk and then tossed upon the heap of canvas cylinders. It is always wise to have stripes painted on your bag in order that you may be able to spot it upon a certain pack train and time your arrival to coincide with said packer. This avoids the necessity of being in camp several hours with none of the "comforts of home."

The camp costume varies greatly. The younger generation of the female species wears shirts and shorts, bathing suits, blue jeans, knickers, and heavens knows what. The opposite sex wears only shorts, or blue jeans. I might say a word here for their complexions as a result of said exposure but you may just use your imagination instead. We found out many things this summer about clothes. For instance—Keds beat hiking boots all hollow. Shorts do not protect the legs. Any number of socks cannot prevent blisters. And even Stronghold blue jeans will wear out at the seat. At the end of four weeks a person who had a whole pair of trousers was an outcast. Even elderly ladies displayed their threadbare breeches without embarrassment. Of course it was most essential to have a pair of loud shorts to wear underneath, but that goes without saying.

### Sleeping in the Rain—

One day it rained—and how it rained. We were camped for four days on Garnet Lake, and a friend and I were fishing about a mile from commissary when we heard the first clap of thunder. We hastened to find shelter, and crept under an overhanging rock. Soon the hail and rain commenced to fall. Simultaneously the water poured down a crevice in the rock and our shelter fast became a lake. We made a dash for home where we found a group huddled under a canvas where the chef was baking bread. It rained all



afternoon and our beds suffered terribly. Hardly a person in camp did not have his blankets drying at campfire that night, and many were forced to sleep there in a wet miserable huddle. Dunnage bags weighed more the next morning and we were allowed no extra pounds. Woe it was for the camper whose bag had hitherto been thirty-five pounds, it was now forty-one and a half pounds, which necessitated his carrying poncho, shoes and flashlight upon his back.

Adhesive tape has a million uses. It was during the rain that we discovered how wonderful it is for mending raincoats and for holding together the neck holes of ponchos. This wonderful stuff can also be used to mend trousers, serve as insoles for shoes, mark clothes, and mend glasses, to say nothing of protecting blisters and its other medical uses.

Our meals were prepared by an able French chef, his two sons, and a boisterous and hard-working commissary bunch. It was served cafeteria style with pots and pans assembled on a split log. Two lines formed which met in the center. Each camper was provided with cup and spoon at the first meal. These you were supposed to keep, while a fork and plate were given out at each later meal, then washed and returned to commissary. Spoons were scarce after the first week, but I soon learned to master soup, rice and chocolate blanc-mange quite cleverly with a fork.

The meals on the whole were marvelous and I never hope to

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Illustrated  
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taste anything better than Dan's cinnamon buns and homemade bread.

When mail and supplies came in we had steak, but one steak, sad to say, was just enough to make you want more—and there was no more. Tea played a great part in our life. We had it cold for lunch, for dinner, along the trail at entertainments, and just before bed. We even learned to like it without sugar and lemon. It was truly the camp drink.

### The Bandana Show

Our social life left nothing to be desired. Each year a bandana show is conducted in the afternoon. This year it was at Benson Lake. Everyone numbered his prize hank with adhesive and handed it in. They were hung up on ropes and classified as to size, shape, and material. Expert judges decided the winners in each class. Prizes were given for the prettiest silk and cotton ones, the most artistic, the most useful and the dirtiest bandana. The most useful one had been on the Sierra Club trips for thirty years. It was blue with white dots, and the cloth where the dots had been was rotted away, leaving round holes. Needless to say, this bandana is one of its owner's most prized possessions. The dirtiest bandana had been wrapped 'around fish and the judges needed no persuasion to give it the prize. Prizes were donated by the "Lost and Found" bag. Tooth paste, cold cream and ipecac were claimed by the lucky winners. Tea and cookies were served after a swim on the beach, and everyone then reclaimed his bandana.

Our campfire entertainments were amateur masterpieces. We had a circus which consisted of acrobats, tight-rope walker, clowns, animals and a band. The girls wore bathing suits and under the able management of a vacationing gym teacher achieved marvelous stunts. The clowns wearing flannel pajamas and peaked caps were screamingly funny. The tight-rope walker walked upon the ground, but a little imagination lifted her to the required height. The animals consisted of people under gunnysacks, huddled in grotesque shapes, and the band instruments were combs and tin pans, but we all had a good time, including the performers.

Our camp fires were always preceded by the "lost and found." Allen stood with a white bag and drew each article out and held it up with an appropriate speech. Some very unusual things were found—in fact, after one experience Allen was almost afraid to reach without looking first. It is surprising how people can forget their possessions in so short a time, and often they were too embarrassed to claim their belongings, so in all probability the Salvation Army will receive a large supply in the near future.

Pate Valley was infested with rattlers and many of us lived in terror during our stay there. One afternoon our naturalist appeared with a live snake which he declared was to be used as an experiment. We kept it in the sun through the use of sticks and in five minutes the snake was absolutely dead. Doctor — then held it up and showed us how the glands which contain the poison work. He even squeezed some out for our benefit. After this, none of us were quite so fearful of finding one in our beds as we had been.

Civilization looked good to most of us on the eighth of August when we scattered to almost every State in the Union. Next year when July comes around we'll all be back again in spite of the fact that—

"I've got grime on my fingers  
Adhesive on my toes,  
Snowbank to sleep upon  
Skeeters on my nose.  
Come to the mountains,  
Join the Sierra Club,  
Get sunburn, snowburn, blister,  
Hardtack and canned grub."